ELSAH HISTORY

Published by Historic Elsah Foundation, P.O. Box 117, Elsah, IL 62028

No. 99

Summer 2010

Signs of the Times

This newsletter begins a four-part series on signs that have appeared in the village over the years and been recorded and preserved through photographs. Part I features signs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Part II will feature signs from the 1920s and 1930s; Part III, signs from the 1950s through 2010; Part IV, signs of the past, replaced by signs with the same message that can be seen in the Village today.

Let's start at the riverfront and go up LaSalle Street.

Photo taken before 1886

Buy your ticket for the St. Louis, Jerseyville, and Springfield Railroad at the "TICKET OFFICE" in the Odd Fellows Hall. See the sign? (The IOOF building was constructed around 1858 — for Brock and Onetto's business — but it served other purposes after 1871, when the Odd Fellows bought it. The building was demolished in 1951.)

Photo 1900 — 1912

Plan on spending a night at Cosmos Keller's "RIVERSIDE HOTEL" at 12 Mississippi Street. (The building we know as Riverview House is today owned by Great Rivers Land Trust and is the home of Sun Smith-Foret.)

Moving up LaSalle Street...

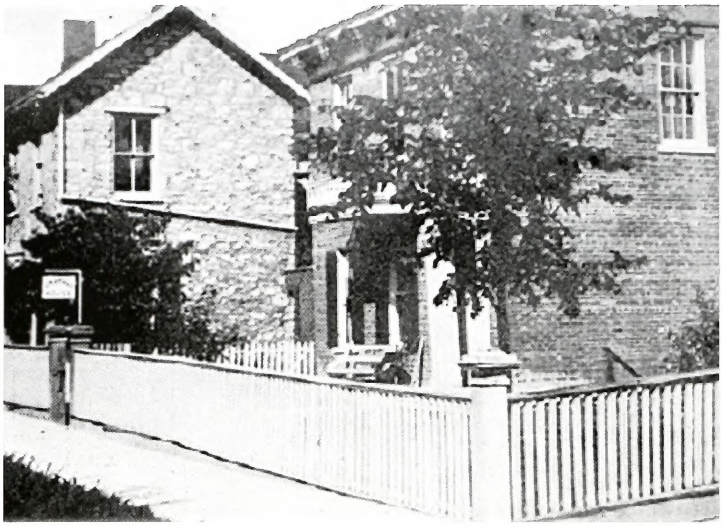

Photo 1908-1910

Stay awhile and relax at the "WORTHEY HOUSE" at 14 LaSalle Street. (In the late 1850s the Onetto family built this brick home. From 1880 to 1882 Enos Doron added features to make it more elaborate. And after 1905 it served as an inn, first under the Wortheys then under Principia. Paula and Ned Bradley purchased the property in 1972 as their private home.)

Photo 1907

Continue strolling up LaSalle Street for "ICE CREAM" at the Mott Building and some baked goods at the "KELLER BAKERY." (The small stone structure on the right is gone. The Mott Building has a new owner, Larry Hammer of Florissant, Missouri. Next door is Jeremiah's Consignment Shop and, soon, the LaSalle Street Bakery.)

Cross Alpa Street...

...to find Elsah's "GENERAL MERCHANT" at 22 LaSalle Street. (Owned for many years by the Keller family, the now vacant store and attached home were purchased by Dory and Blair Smith, who reside there.)

Photo c.1910

Get your "STAR TOBACCO — THE LEADING BRAND IN THE WORLD" at McDow's store located in the Union Hotel, 28, 30, and 32 LaSalle Street. (The Union Hotel was built around 1859 and stood for more than 140 years. It partly burned in April 2003 and the ruins were subsequently removed.)

Moving over to Mill and Selma Streets...

Date unknown

...on the corner you can pick up your mail or post a letter at the "POST OFFICE." (This building no longer exists. On the site is a beautiful garden belonging to Brenda Coffman's Green Tree Inn.)

Photo 1991

And finally, get your "WAGONS AND BUGGIES MADE & REPAIRED" at 22 Mill Street. (The Buggy Shop was built in the summer of 1877. The lettering remains and has been restored several times, even though the building has been used as a residence for many years. Present owners: Deborah and Tim Smith of St. Louis.)

Many thanks to Jeralyn Lewitz for organizing the photographs and accompanying text for this article.
If you have any old signs you would like to include in this series, please contact Marie Oleson.

Museum News

Natural Elsah is the theme for the eleventh annual photo contest. The opening reception for the exhibit was Sunday, July 18 and the exhibit will close Saturday, October 16. The judge, Janice Nesser-Chu, a working photographer/artist and photography professor at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, selected the winning photographs.

Joan Vogel Baker is the $150 purchase prize winner for her entry of *Pretty in Pink* in this year's photography contest. Unfortunately the picture printed here in black and white does not show the beauty of the pink dogwood blossoms or the contrasting greenery. Karen King received special recognition for her entry of *Portal to the Wild.*

The museum's annual Bake & Book sale will be Saturday, October 16. The book sale portion of this event will extend to Sunday, October 31, when the museum closes for the season.

The Village Museum is located in the Village Hall, 26 LaSalle Street, and is jointly maintained by the Village of Elsah and Historic Elsah Foundation. Members of the museum committee are: Marge Doerr, Inge Mack, Marie Oleson, Jane Pfeifer, Jim Schmidt, Mary Anne Schmidt, and Lynn Schreiber.

A sincere thank you to the volunteers who staff the museum when it is open to the public: Kathy Baird, Ryan Baird, Paula Bradley, Samantha DaRosa, Marge Doerr, Ellen Hanold, Ed Lewitz, Inge Mack, Jane and David Pfeifer, Lynn Schreiber, and Mary Tober.

Purchase Prize winner, *Pretty in Pink* by Joan Vogel Baker

The museum is open from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons, from May through October

Remembering Friends

Eleanor Barnal *Photo: Inge Mack*

Eleanor Barnal

Long time Elsah resident Eleanor Palmer Barnal passed away earlier this year. Eleanor grew up in the local rural area of Illinois and came to Elsah to work in the dining services department at Principia College, where she worked for many years. She married Elsah native John Barnal on November 8, 1947 and they had one son, Michael, who lives in Edwardsville. John passed away in 1990.

Eleanor was an active member of the Elsah United Methodist Church and a Life Member of HEF. She also served on the HEF Board for many years. Eleanor will long be remembered for her happy smile, her eagerness to be of service and her love for baking and needlework.

Report to Members and Friends

Village Zoning Proposal

As one of the long term solutions to financial issues that many municipalities find themselves in today, caused in part by the economic downturn and the State's financial problems, the Village Board of Trustees began to look at long-term economic solutions. One of those was controlled business expansion. The Zoning Board at their Nov. 9, 2009 meeting unanimously passed a motion to ask the Trustees to look at: (1) expanding the business district; (2) developing a process for individual properties to be rezoned; (3) allowing home business; and (4) rezoning the old police building for business use. As a result of this request the Trustees appointed an Economic Development Task Force.

The Task Force reviewed the history of Elsah's business district, analyzed the possible impact of increased business activity in terms of historic preservation and traffic, and developed a proposal which would modify Elsah's zoning ordinance. In addition to open meetings of the Zoning Board, Village Board, and Task Force, four public hearings were held which gave villagers an opportunity to speak to the proposal.

Currently there are two commercial properties zoned B2: the Mott Building at 18 LaSalle, where the restaurant was housed, and 20 LaSalle, where Jeremiah's Consignment Shop is located. The proposal recommends adding two properties: 22 LaSalle (the home of Dory and Blair Smith), and the three vacant lots where the Union Hotel once stood, at 28, 30, and 32 LaSalle.

The proposal also recommends an increase in properties zoned B1 (low density business) from eight to fifteen. At first glance, this seems like a large increase in B1 zoned properties, but three of the current eight properties would be rezoned from B1 to B2 (the three vacant lots where the Union Hotel once stood as outlined in the previous paragraph).

Of the twelve remaining properties, five currently zoned B1 are owned by two businesses with the recommendation to rezone to B1 two additional properties contiguous to and owned by those same businesses: The Green Tree Inn and the Maple Leaf Cottage Inn.

The remaining five properties are private homes, all of which have some history as a business and/or are properties contiguous to current or proposed B1 properties. Ultimately this might involve, at the most, five new low impact businesses if everyone took advantage of this change. Businesses in homes would be regulated as to signage, square footage that can be used, and preservation of the historic exterior of the building.

HEF's Board of Trustees met on June 1 for a special meeting to discuss the proposal. Every one present felt strongly that the peaceful and historic character of the village must be preserved. There was a fear among some that if the Village Board adopts the proposal there would be irreparable negative change. Others believe the proposal will provide a positive opportunity for the village. Even though the Board cannot speak with one voice in opposition or support of the proposal, Board members do appreciate the honest and dedicated work of the Task Force.

(NB: Riverview, one of the five private homes the proposal recommended to be zoned B1, was removed from the proposal at the request of the owner, The Great Rivers Land Trust. Elsah's Zoning Board unanimously approved the proposal at their August 5 meeting and the Board of Trustees unanimously voted for final approval at their August 10 meeting.)

Farley's Music Hall Update

The restoration of Farley's Music Hall is complete! The exterior of the structure has been renovated and painted, new copper gutters have been crafted and hung, the chimneys have been repaired and tuckpointed where needed, and a new roof has been installed. The building looks great.

Students in Principia College's art department, under the tutelage of their professor, Dan Kistler, are designing signage that will designate the interior meeting hall as the Charles Hosmer and Paul Williams Hall. Our next issue will report on the progress of this project. *--Marie Oleson, president*

Village Happenings

The LaSalle Street Bakery will be open for business on September 1. They will be serving fresh pastries for breakfast and seasonal soups, salads, sandwiches, pizzas (which can be delivered), amazing pot pies, and desserts for lunch and dinner, all prepared in a newly renovated kitchen.

Located at 20 LaSalle Street, in the front room of Jeremiah's-Elsah, the new bakery will also offer a variety of artisan breads, baked fresh daily, and white, wheat, and rye breads by special order. Diners will also have access to free wi-fi. The proprietors are Ryan Baird and Samantha DaRosa.

Hours will be from 6:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M. every day except Monday and Tuesday.

(An interesting side note is the discovery made when removing old linoleum. An envelope had been nailed to the floor and on it was written "This was put down Sept 1955 Ed Keller, L. Keller Jr, H. Stubbs," Should this be "Stubbs" or "Stobbs"?)

Jeremiah's-Elsah. To make room for the new LaSalle Street Bakery, Jeremiah's Consignment Shop will continue business as usual in the back room. Open 10:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M. Wednesday through Saturday.

Elsah's Community Farm: On April 30, Amy Cloud spoke in Farley's about the Three Rivers Community Farm she operates together with her husband Segue Lara. A membership in the farm entitles you to a weekly abundance of fresh organically grown produce and flowers from May through November.

Just about every vegetable imaginable is grown from arugula to zucchini, with an impressive selection of different varieties.

Amy Cloud *Photo: Elizabeth Oleson*

***The Western Chautauqua* is the title of a new history of New Piasa Chautauqua.** The author is HEF Board member Tim Tomlinson. Tim is an Associate Director *emeritus* of the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania and has considerable experience in the field of history. On May 21 Tim spoke in Farley's about his book and the history of the Chautauqua Movement.

The publishing of this new book was sponsored by the Chautauqua Historical Society and Historic Elsah Foundation. The book builds on an HEF published history written by Bill Fabian in the 1970s. Tim continues and expands the story of how the Illinois Chautauqua survived and prospered over a 125 year period and added new information and new pictures.

Timothy R. Tomlinson

Mott Building — The commercial structure, commonly known as the Mott Building that housed My Just Desserts, has been sold. The new owner is Larry Hammer. The building is being prepared for an art studio and gallery, operated by Dan Fishback. More information will be available later

Home and Garden tours: On Saturday, June 19, HEF and Jersey State Bank sponsored a very successful public tour of nine Elsah gardens. Many thanks to Tim Tomlinson, George Provenzano and their team of volunteers who organized this event.

On Sunday, July 18, HEF sponsored another successful home and garden tour for those attending Principia College's summer session.

HEF thanks those who shared their lovely homes and gardens for these two successful HEF fund raising events.

Upcoming Activities in the Village of Elsah...

Community Contra Dance in Farley's Music Hall
Regular schedule for the third Saturdays of the month will be **September 18, October 16, and November 20, 2010**. And, **January 15, February 19, March 19, April 16, and May 21, 2011.** Beginners and children are welcome. 7:00 P.M.

Talk by Bob Hartman, scheduled for September 24, is being rescheduled for early spring 2011.

Museum's annual Bake and Book Sale
Saturday, October 16, from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. Museum
Book sale will continue on days museum is open through Sunday, October 31, when the museum closes for winter.

Talk by Beverly Bauser, author of *Remembering Elsah*
Friday, October 22, at 7:30 P.M. Farley's Music Hall

Home for the Holidays house tour, caroling procession, Christmas tree lighting, and more.
Saturday, December 4 House tour 3:00 to 5:45 P.M. followed by caroling procession at 6:00 P.M.

Christmas Sing — all are welcome
Sunday, December 19, from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M.
Starts in the Methodist Church, moves to the Christian Science Church, and ends with refreshments and fellowship in Farley's Music Hall.

The Village warmly welcomes new residents...

...John Meyers and family — 2 Maple Street
...John and Stephanie Lovseth — 5 Mill Street

and returning resident...

...Sandra Stack — 3 Mill Street

and we bid farewell to...

...Jack & Brenda Phillips — 2 Maple Street

A warn welcome to new members...

Beverly Bauser, Godfrey, Illinois
Georgia and Richard Dearborn, Ballwin, Missouri
Joan and Fritz Faerber, Elsah, Illinois
Pam Gunsten, Elsah, Illinois
Heidi and Chris Snow, Elsah, Illinois
John Thompson, Innsbrook, Missouri
Barbara Porter Williams, Beaverton, Oregon
Mary A. Williams, Arlington, Virginia
Dora and Bill Whitehead, Elsah, Illinois
Beverly and David Wrobel, Chesterfield, Missouri

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ISSN 1552-9002

Elsah History is published by Historic Elsah Foundation.
Subscription is with membership. Editor: Marie Oleson
Memberships for 2010:
Patron $25 to $99
Supporter $100 to $249
Founders' Circle $250 and above
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P.O. Box 117, Elsah, IL 62028

The purposes of Historic Elsah Foundation are stated in the Articles of Incorporation (1971):
"...the preservation and enhancement of the historic buildings, houses, architecture and culture of the Village of Elsah, Illinois, the historic areas, the publication of historical brochures, pamphlets, and periodicals regarding the Village, and the establishment of an educational program to inform the general public of the historical and educational value of the Village."